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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR AUGUST 15, 2005

¶1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for August 15, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

¶11. SABAH (GUNEY): Hulusi Kilic, Turkey's Consul General in Aleppo, has been assigned to a new position in the Foreign Ministry. As Kilic paid a visit to Hatay Governor Abdulkadir Sari to bid farewell, Sari said Kilic has made important contributions to strengthening of relationships between Syria and Turkey. (This article is from 08/13 edition.)

¶12. OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily's front page coverage read, "Erdogan went to Diyarbakir, but people (in Diyarbakir) did not go to listen to him." During his visit in Diyarbakir, PM Erdogan, "instead of announcing viable solutions to improve an environment of violence", reportedly delivered a speech on his government's economic merits. The people listening to Erdogan reportedly regarded PM's messages as positive, but not sufficient in essence, and people were reportedly frustrated about not hearing a call for peace. (This article is from 08/13 edition.)

¶13. OZGUR GUNDEM: Diyarbakir's Mayor Osman Baydemir said that the Kurdish people were not fighting in the mountains to pass leisure time. Should an environment of democracy prevail, then the Kurds would not have to resort to armed fighting, said Baydemir. Baydemir further stated that it was an important step for PM Erdogan to state the name of the problem in his speech and to acknowledge that the (Turkish) state has made some administrative mistakes (against the Kurds) in the past. Baydemir said that the time had come to take concrete steps to solve the issue without ever compromising on principles of democracy. (This article is from 08/13 edition.)

¶14. ZAMAN: Governor's Office in Hakkari and the Directorate of National Highways and Roads separately said that their offices had been prioritizing demands coming from military officials in response to the military officials' complaints that soldiers were dying because the roads used by the security officers and soldiers had not been covered with asphalt despite the military's demands to do so. Roads without asphalt were reportedly making military personnel vulnerable to mine attacks. (This article is from 08/13 edition.)

¶15. EKSPRES / BOLGE: Hasan Yaman, MHP Provincial Chairperson

of Adana's Seyhan district criticized PM Erdogan because of the speeches Erdogan made in his Diyarbakir visit. For Hasan, PM's speeches incited separatism among the people, and Hasan urged prosecutors to take action in this respect.

¶16. HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): A road in Gaziantep's city center nearby an old bazaar where hand-made copper articles are being sold collapsed, and interconnected caves, which were used as arsenals during the Liberation War of Turks (in 1920s) were revealed.

¶17. OZGUR GUNDEM: In response to PM Erdogan's speech saying that the (Turkish) state would face the mistakes it had made in the past, NGOs (in the southeastern Turkey) urged PM Erdogan to correct those past mistakes through open dialogue with the Kurdish movement's representatives, resolving the region's still-unsolved murders and people's disappearances, and remedying the affects of forced migration.

¶18. OZGUR GUNDEM: Orhan Dogan, one of the representatives of the DTH (Democratic Society Movement), said that PM Erdogan should be given a chance to fulfill the promises he made in Diyarbakir. In line with that, Dogan said the PKK/Kongra-Gel terrorist organization must stop its activities in the region. Meanwhile, DEHAP National Chairperson Tuncer Bakirhan said that Kurds should also take steps following the statements Erdogan's statements to end armed activities.

¶19. ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM: PKK terrorist organization is reportedly "celebrating the 22nd anniversary of taking up arms." PKK reportedly issued a call for the Kurdish people to work actively for the campaign that reportedly aims to liberate the terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan. Meanwhile, the dailies cite many incidences occurring during the celebrations in Istanbul, Adana, Izmir and Sirnak's Silopi district.

¶10. OZGUR GUNDEM: A military operation was reportedly launched in the Elazig province responding to the explosion which took place as the convoy of cars, including Elazig Governor Kadir Kocdemir's car, was passing on a road in Elazig (on an unspecified date).

¶11. ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM: Jandarma revealed that temporary village guard Muhyettin Sengul was killed by his own son and not by PKK terrorists two days ago. Relatives of Sengul had earlier claimed that PKK killed him.

¶12. ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM: Mehmet Agar, National Chairperson of DYP (True Path Party), reportedly said that PM Erdogan, instead of resolving the issues, had caused greater problems with the statements uttered during his Diyarbakir visit. Agar reportedly said that PM Erdogan carried out his visit to a province of Turkey, as if he was visiting another country. Agar blamed PM Erdogan for being ignorant about what liabilities the PM's words in Diyarbakir would create for him in the future, and Agar further blamed Erdogan for conveying different political messages to, for example, a mother of a martyr in Izmir province, and to the people in Diyarbakir province.

¶13. CUMHURIYET: Four alleged PKK/Kongra-Gel terrorists were caught in Batman while preparing for a bomb attack at the Batman city center using four kilograms of A-4 explosives. The authorities have not provided any information about the targets of the terrorists, but specialists said that the terrorists might have been targeting the petroleum refinery in Batman.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

¶1. ZAMAN / BOLGE / EKSPRES: The business world in Adana is reportedly getting ready for the third of "Cukurova Industrial and Commercial Fair" which will be held between September 26 and October 2 in Adana.

¶2. BOLGE / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / SABAH (GUNEY) / OZGUR GUNDEM: The port of Mersin has been sold to a consortium of companies from Turkey and Singapore for 755 million USD for a period of 36 years.

¶3. SABAH (GUNEY): Gaziantep's and the southeastern region's exports have increased by 38 percent in the first seven months of the year.